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Mailbag

MOB Information Wanted

I recently started building a model based on the MOB. Stage one, reverse loops representing Zweisimmen, is now complete. I'm just about to embark on the main area of the model. Although books and video are helpful to give a feel for the line I shall soon be needing more information on some details which are not fully apparent from the publications I have. With a family at school and college, it will be some time before we will be able to visit Switzerland and see for myself.

Please could I make an appeal through *Swiss Express* to other members who have an interest in the MOB or have already built a model of the line for help. Contact through the address or phone number below; any expense incurred will be refunded.

Gerald Savine

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Upton-Upon-Severn,

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As I pointed out last month, there are coach tours. Recently our local free paper offered a 5 day break in Chateau d'Oex for £135; say £150-160 with extras. This is an excellent base for studying the MOB as well as a good spot for a holiday break. You won't get much cheaper anywhere!

CJF

The North West Bit

In the second part of my article *The North West Bit* I mentioned the signalling at Olten, where the aspects changed after the signal had been cleared. I stated that I had initiated enquiries about this and am pleased to say that they have borne fruit.

Olten and, I believe, other places with complicated track layouts and a heavy train service, use a variation of the standard Swiss signalling system which is very much akin to the principles used in Britain. The purpose is to clear the road ahead for a train as soon as possible, with the signal changing to a less



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restrictive aspect as the first train gets further away.

This equates to the British 4-aspect colour light system, where a signal will change from red to single yellow and then double yellow, then to green, as a train which has passed the signal proceeds.

This application to the Swiss signalling is not referred to in either the SBB or the Rudolf Butz books on Swiss Signalling.

A couple of errors crept into the March *Swiss Express*. On page 5 the photograph of Re4/4^{IV} 10101 does not show the locomotive in its original livery, but in the livery applied to all four members of the class to promote Bahn 2000.

The text on page 15 refers to ex-BN railcar No.101. This should read ex BLS railcar No.201, as shown in the caption to the photograph on page 13.

The Oensingen-Balsthal Bahn (OeBB) 0-6-0T No.1, illustrated on page 14, was built by Maffei in 1909 for the Güterbahn Kriens-Luzern (KLB), being No.1 of that line. In 1926 it became SBB No.8651 and in 1933 went to von Roll at Klus, where it again carried the No.1. It was transferred from von Roll to the OeBB on 5 February 1975 and started its career of working special trains the following year.

The other steam locomotive, 0-6-0T No.2, was built in 1899 by SLM for the OeBB, as their No.2. From 1943 until 1967 it worked at Gerlafingen at the von Roll works, and then returned home. It started working specials in August 1975.

A word of explanation is perhaps necessary regarding the use of the terms "plastic pig" and "refugee from Bournemouth" in the first part of the article (pages 17 & 18). The line from Waterloo through Bournemouth to Weymouth is largely operated by some fairly new electric units which, despite all efforts by the management to suppress the term, are universally known by the staff as "plastic pigs". The units are based at the depot at Bournemouth. As I come into everyday contact with the confounded things, my thoughts naturally came up with these expressions.

John Jesson
Croydon

As the Waterloo - Bournemouth - Weymouth EMUs are commonly called "plastic pigs" in the Model Railway Club, and the term appears to be fairly well known among enthusiasts, I did not think an explanation necessary. However, when visiting my daughter in Weymouth recently, I discovered she called the sets by their approved name, "Wessex". This is the first time I've known her acknowledge that there are different sorts of trains, this and my own brief acquaintance with the stock does suggest that, whatever the staff may think, the passengers approve. In this context, I was talking trains with a local inhabitant in a Weymouth pub, who was completely unaware that the stock was electric even though he had travelled in it regularly. This has nothing to do with Switzerland, but it does illustrate how little people care about the finer details, even though they may be strongly pro-railway.

CJF

Swiss Stock in Austria

With regard to Swiss stock in Austria (*Swiss Express* 3/8 p 45), you omitted four ex-Vereinigte Bern-Worb Bahnen (VBW) bogie coaches sold in 1973 to the Steiermärkischen Landesbahnen (StLB): unfortunately I do not know their VBW numbers but they are numbered as follows on the StLB.

Ba77, Ba78 : Originally on the Murtalbahn (Unzmarkt - Tamswag), now on the Feistritzalbahn (Weix - Birkfeld).

WR44 : now on the Feistritzalbahn as a Barwagen.

Ba79(?) : the body of this vehicle was in terrible condition; a new one is under construction.

The coaches on the Feistritzalbahn are used on summer steam specials. As the line is 760 mm gauge, the usual regauging measures have been taken, but Ba77/8 retain the original bogies.

For plans of the Furka-Oberalp stations, see the Schweers and Wal book, all are featured.

Andrew Hyleman
Dundee